

Camp Victory Ministries
58212 - 403 Avenue
Zumbro Falls, MN 55991
May 13, 2009

Stephanie A. Strength
11400 Independence Ave. S.W. MAIL STOP 1571
Washington, DC 20250-1571

Re: Cap X 2020 Rochester – LaCrosse 345 KV Project Routes B17 & B18 RUS EIS

Dear Ms Strength:

We support, respect, and appreciate the need to plan for the future and meet the growth demands for electrical services in S.E. Minnesota caused by the growth in both population and business in the area. Likewise, today's need for personal stress relief with quiet and solitude or leisure activities and leisure open space is a growing situation and priority in people's lives. Public and private recreational areas, residential sites close to nature, and adjacency to water away from the pressures of urban city living, is a highly sought after and premium commodity for this reason. This section of the Zumbro river valley and Lake Zumbro are the closest adjacency to Rochester and one of the few useable lakes and rivers in S.E. Minnesota. To run a 345 K.V. high pole power line through this rural community is a hard-core, maximum impact, incompatible industrial intrusion, and should not be done. What is the total impact?

Today Camp Victory has over \$3 M invested and served over 1,200 people last summer, with 90 kids plus staff on site all summer. Ultimately, the camp's master plan grows to around 350 kids plus 150 staff each week in the summer.

The camp is expanding its programs including adult retreats throughout the year and a growing day camp program in the summers.

We are writing to express specific concerns about the potential impacts of the B17 and B18 route location option on Camp Victory. They are:

- The southern 2000 feet of the camp's bluff land is an undeveloped natural setting used for outdoor life education in addition to the primitive camping. It is available to groups of various sizes to use, learn, explore and enjoy. They can be anywhere, and all over, this site.
- There is a natural terrace along this bluff that is part of a children's camping program. It includes 30-50 children living in tents for up to one week at a time for a scheduled 11 weeks in the summer. Other groups utilize these primitive sites during weekends over the balance of the spring, summer, and fall camping season.
- We are highly concerned about the impact on these groups of children as the potential power line route B18 directly overlaps this area. What are the electrical fields, magnetic fields and attracted lightening risks to youth activities and sleeping in, around, and under the power lines?
- This portion of the bluff has a substantial iron content in the subsurface rock. (A mining company once owned it with the intent of mining iron ore.) How does this impact or extend the magnetic field influence?

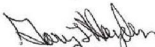
B-013-001

- Routing a major trunk power line through this location along the bluffs and across the Lake Zumbro would present a major negative visual impact both upstream and downstream through the heart of this beautiful, rural community setting. What is the magnitude of the impact on the quality of life in the adjacent area?
- The bluffland zoning ordinance in this area is highly controlling for any visual impact or disruption to the bluffs. Construction of roads and buildings by individual landowners is prohibited in this zone for that reason. Should a power line be exempted from this policy/philosophy?
- The Minnesota D.N.R. has previously considered and is currently pursuing a "scenic and wild river" formal designation for this area to preserve the natural beauty of the river, bluffs and valley for the benefit of the general public. How does the proposed power line fit it?
- Topography along this route rises up to 320 feet vertically from the river to the bluff top (El 860 – El. 1180).
- There are numerous steep slopes, cross slopes and ravines to be crossed with the route identified. Some slopes are in the 90 foot vertical rise per 100 foot horizontal distance category.
- A portion of the soils along the river terraces are very sandy and highly erodible. Construction and maintenance traffic is detrimental and is an environmental risk. Currently there are locations in this area with serious erosion caused by past logging operations. What is the potential impact from the power line clearing, construction, and ongoing maintenance?
- There is a longstanding occupied eagle's nest along this river bluff within 100 feet of route B18.
- Maintenance access to service this area would be quite difficult. In addition to the slope and cross slope issues, there are few roads in the area. Access would need to come from the east end and travel the easement right of way over very rugged terrain for over a mile to access the westerly portions of this route. Is this the best route for maintenance needs?
- There is another private Christian camp adjacent to this property. Woodland Camp, a long established camp for children and adult groups lays full length along the southeast property line and would be significantly impacted by route B18. Route B18 goes directly through their camp, and could well put them out of business. Is that appropriate and necessary?

B-013-002

Notwithstanding, we suggest serious consideration of meeting the power grid expansion by utilizing existing roadway and utility easements and right of way, such as the County Highway 12 and 247 corridors that already disrupt the countryside environmentally. Another option would be to transverse this area further north at a location with lesser scenic bluffland, environmental, recreational, and residential impacts.

Sincerely,



Gary L. Hayden, P.E.

Camp Victory Board

(507) 843-2329

B-013-001

Your comment has been noted. Potential impacts to the aesthetic quality of the areas surrounding the transmission line will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be available on the RUS website at: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/eis.htm>. Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be solicited after its publication.

B-013-002

Your comment has been noted. The criteria used to route the transmission line is described in the Macro Corridor Study which is available on the RUS website at: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/eis.htm>. These criteria and routing process will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The project is still in the development and planning stages and the utilities have not yet permitted a route for the transmission line.

B-013-003

Your comment has been noted. Potential impacts to recreational resources will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.